MARVEL KNIGHTS

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SPIDER-MAN

JENKINS
WINSLADE
PALMER

DAREDEVIL

ONE OF FOUR

USUALLY, THESE THINGS BEGIN WITH A BANG. THIS ONE BEGINS WITH A WHIMPER...
IT AIN'T FAIR --!
SKRASH
HH-UHH... YOU LEAVE ME ALONE, YOU HEAR ME? -:HUFF:- I NEVER DID NUTHIN' --
-:HUFF:- THA'S RIGHT... YOU KEEP OFFA ME, MAN. YOU THINK I'M SCARED OF YOU? I AIN'T SCARED --!
WELL, WELL... KENNY FITZGERALD, AS I LIVE AND BREATHE.
NICE SMELL YOU'VE INVENTED THERE, FITZY.

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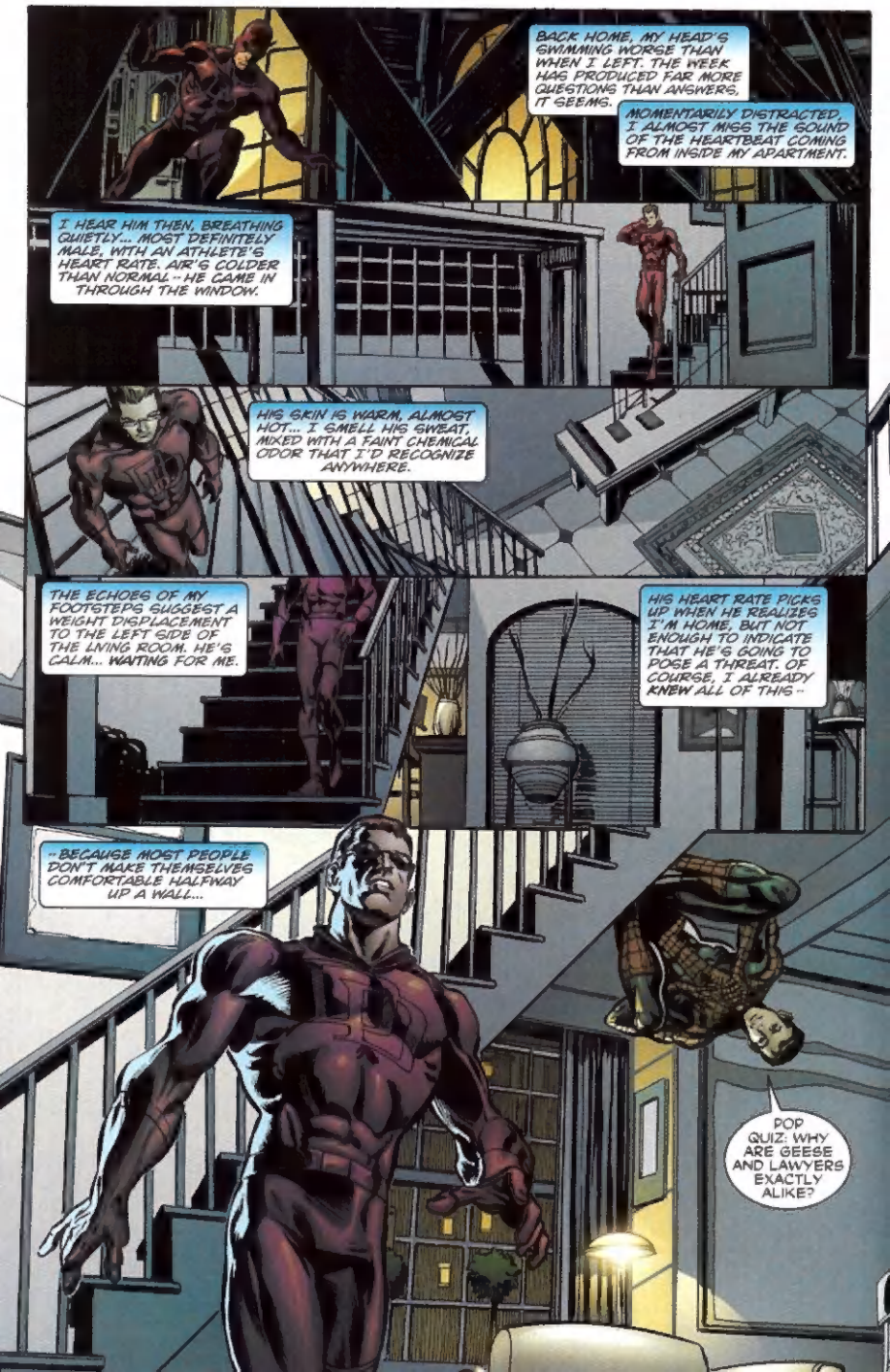
HHH... STAY AWAY FROM ME! I NEVER DID NUTHIN', I SWEAR.
THWIP
YOU GOTTA BELIEVE ME --
:-WHUP:-
THIS JUST IN, KENNETH, MY MAN: IN CASE YOU'RE STILL CONFUSED ABOUT THE WAY THINGS WORK, I'M THE SPIDER AND YOU'RE THE FLY.
SO, SEE, THAT MEANS I'M ONTO YOU. DOESN'T TAKE A ROCKET SCIENTIST TO NOTICE THAT FOR A MAN SO SLOW ON THE UPTAKE, YOU MOVE A LOT QUICKER WHEN THE GOOD GUYS SHOW.
HHH... NOT ANYMORE, MISTER SPIDER-MAN, I SWEAR --
-- I'M JUST RUNNING INFORMATION THESE DAYS. :-HRKK:- YOU DON'T WANT ME... I'M SMALL POTATOES.
THEY WANTED ME TO DO STUFF, BUT I'M LIKE, "NO WAY, JOSE! NOT IN A MILLION YEARS."
I DON'T DO THAT NO MORE, I PROMISE... :-HRKK:- ALLS I GOT IS INFORMATION --
WELL, GOOD. MAYBE YOU CAN INFORM ME AS TO WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT --?

YOU KNOW WHAT I DON'T GET, FITZY? HOW COME EVERY TIME I RUN INTO YOU, FIRST THING OUT OF YOUR WEASELLY LITTLE MOUTH IS "I NEVER DONE NUTHIN'!"
SO THEN, WE'VE GOTTA GO TO ALL THIS EXTRA EFFORT JUST TO GET WHERE WE WERE GOING IN THE FIRST PLACE. YOU RUN, I CHASE. YOU FALL OVER, I CATCH YOU. THEN, ONE LITTLE JERK...
I AIN'T SAYIN' A WORD --
THREE THINGS I LIKE ABOUT YOU, FITZ: ONE, YOU'RE, LIKE, THE PERENNIAL LAST-PLACE FINISHER IN THE "CRIMINAL MASTERMIND OF THE YEAR" COMPETITION.
TWO, YOU GOT A MOUTH THE SIZE OF THE HOLLAND TUNNEL...
...AND VOILA! ONE BIG JERK!
AND THREE, YOU'RE AFRAID OF HEIGHTS.
NN-AAHH!
NN-NAHH!

I MAY BE BLIND, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FEEL.
LATELY, I FEEL LIKE I'M THRASHING IN A BIG, SCUMMY OCEAN. AND ALL THE SHARKS ARE DOWN BELOW, WATCHING MY LEGS...
...AND BIDING THEIR TIME.
UNUSUAL SUSPECTS
PART ONE
PAUL JENKINS SCRIPT ROBOT PHIL WINSLADE PENCIL DROID TOM PALMER INKING MACHINE
AVALON STUDIOS/MATT MILLA COLOR MAGIC RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT'S TROY PETERI LETTERMATORS
DANCI DANKSIAN EDITO-COMPUTOID KELLY LAMY ASSISTANT EDITO-COMPUTOID JOE QUESADA THE SUPREME CALCULATOR
DAREDEVIL SPIDER-MAN

I'M DAREDEVIL -- YEARS AGO, WHEN I LOST MY SIGHT, I WAS GIVEN THE ABILITY TO SENSE INSTEAD. I CAN SEE AND FEEL THINGS OTHER PEOPLE CAN'T. I CAN ALWAYS TELL WHEN THERE'S TROUBLE IN THE WATER.
I CAN TASTE IT ON THE AIR CURRENTS THAT DRIFT UPWARDS FROM HELL'S KITCHEN, MINGLED WITH THE REEK OF TOBACCO AND STALE FOOD, AND THE CHATTER OF TEN MILLION HEARTBEATS.
THESE LAST FEW DAYS, THE BOTTOM FEEDERS HAVE BEEN BUSY.
DOWN AT THE DOCKS, A DEAL GOES BAD -- AN UNKNOWN THIRD PARTY MAKES OFF UNOBSERVED WITH SOME EXPENSIVE MERCHANDISE. MY JOB IS SUDDENLY TWELVE WISEGUYS SIMPLER, AND THE GENE POOL IS A LITTLE CLEANER.
EXCEPT THE MERCHANDISE IN QUESTION BELONGS TO A CERTAIN MISTER WILSON FISK, WHICH... COMPLICATES THINGS.
ROOMS TO LET
CASA BORLO

BUT IT DOESN'T END THERE - IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING OF A BAD WEEK.
SAME NIGHT, A VERY EXPENSIVE AND UNDERINSURED WAREHOUSE GOES UP IN SMOKE. SAME M.O., BUT IT FIGURES TO BE AN ACCIDENT - PERHAPS ANOTHER COINCIDENCE.
NEXT NIGHT, SOMEONE ABRUPTLY TURNS OUT THE LIGHTS ON AN ILLEGAL CASINO OPERATION IN THE CITY. MORE DEAD VILLAINS, MORE POETIC JUSTICE.
AND HERE'S WHERE CHANCE AND INTENT BEGIN TO DIVERGE. A CERTAIN MISTER WILSON FISK IS KNOWN TO BE A FREQUENT PATRON OF THE RESTAURANT UPSTAIRS.
UNLESS YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN COINCIDENCES.


BACK HOME, MY HEAD'S SWIMMING WORSE THAN WHEN I LEFT. THE WEEK HAS PRODUCED FAR MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS, IT SEEMS.
MOMENTARILY DISTRACTED, I ALMOST MISS THE SOUND OF THE HEARTBEAT COMING FROM INSIDE MY APARTMENT.
I HEAR HIM THEN, BREATHING QUIETLY... MOST DEFINITELY MALE, WITH AN ATHLETE'S HEART RATE. AIR'S COLDER THAN NORMAL -- HE CAME IN THROUGH THE WINDOW.
HIS SKIN IS WARM, ALMOST HOT... I SMELL HIS SWEAT, MIXED WITH A FAINT CHEMICAL ODOR THAT I'D RECOGNIZE ANYWHERE.
THE ECHOES OF MY FOOTSTEPS SUGGEST A WEIGHT DISPLACEMENT TO THE LEFT SIDE OF THE LIVING ROOM. HE'S CALM... WAITING FOR ME.
HIS HEART RATE PICKS UP WHEN HE REALIZES I'M HOME, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO INDICATE THAT HE'S GOING TO POSE A THREAT. OF COURSE, I ALREADY KNEW ALL OF THIS --
-- BECAUSE MOST PEOPLE DON'T MAKE THEMSELVES COMFORTABLE HALFWAY UP A WALL...
POP QUIZ: WHY ARE GEESE AND LAWYERS EXACTLY ALIKE?

'CAUSE THEY CAN BOTH STICK THEIR BILL UP THEIR --
HEARD IT, ALREADY. COME ON IN, PETER. MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.
I ALREADY DID -- LOVE THE NEW DIGS, BY THE WAY. I GOT SOMETHING YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN:
I TAKE IT YOU HEARD SOME MORON STEPPED IN ON A PRETTY MAJOR DEAL DOWN AT THE DOCKS LAST WEEK, WALKED OFF WITH HALF A TON OF BLOW AND THE CASH TO PAY FOR IT, RIGHT?
GUY APPARENTLY DIDN'T REALIZE THE GOODS BELONGED TO A CERTAIN CRIMINAL VIP OF OUR ACQUAINTANCE WHOSE NAME RHYMES WITH "KINGPIN."
THOSE IN THE KNOW FIGURE IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE SHOWS UP FOR A MIDNIGHT SWIM WEARING A SUIT OF ARMOR.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YEAH...
RIGHT. WELL, NO ONE IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD GO UP AGAINST FISK. BUT WHAT IF IT TURNED OUT THAT WHOEVER STOLE ALL THAT NOSE CANDY DIDN'T DO IT BY ACCIDENT?
THAT IMPORT/EXPORT WAREHOUSE SOMEBODY TORCHED THE NEXT NIGHT? RUN BY A COMPANY CALLED WATERWAY IMPORTS -- I CHECKED IT OUT... IT'S ALL LEGIT.
EXCEPT FOR ONE SMALL DETAIL THAT DOESN'T SHOW UP ON THE POLICE REPORT: WATERWAY IMPORTS IS SOLELY OWNED AND OPERATED BY A COMPANY CALLED MANHATTAN MERCHANDISING, INCORPORATED.
AND GUESS WHICH HUMAN BUCKET OF LARD OWNS M.M.I.?
KINGPIN!

SOMEONE'S MAKING A PLAY ON FISK? I DOUBT IT... THEY'D HAVE TO BE INSANE --
YOU GOT ANY SODA? THIS STUFF GIVES ME GAS.
IT'S WATER -- KEEPS YOU HYDRATED, PETER...
YEAH, WELL... TALKING OF "HYDRATED," I RAN INTO THAT LITTLE SWEAT STAIN KENNY FITZGERALD THIS AFTERNOON.
I'M FIGURING I'LL JUST PRESS HIM ABOUT THE WAREHOUSE THING, ONLY BEFORE I CAN SAY A WORD HE TURNS TAIL AND RUNS LIKE A RABBIT.
WE HAVE A CONVERSATION IN AN ALLEY, AND THE POOR LITTLE TOERAG JUST ABOUT FALLS OVER HIMSELF TRYING TO HIDE THE FACT THAT EVERYTHING'S CONNECTED AND HE'S INVOLVED.
PROBLEM IS, RIGHT AFTER HE STARTS TALKING HE GETS REAL SCARED AND CLAMS UP. WON'T SAY WHO THE NEW MUSCLE IN TOWN IS.
ALL I CAN GET OUT OF HIM AFTER THAT IS THE NAME OF THE GUY WHO TRIED TO RECRUIT HIM --
-- SOME SLIMEBALL NAMED JACK DANIEL ABBOTT. KNOW HIM?
NATURALLY. I'M DEFENDING JACK ABBOTT NEXT MONTH ON A PAROLE VIOLATION.

SO I HEARD. I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR -- GO PAY THIS GUY A VISIT, FIND OUT WHO'S PAYING HIS LEGAL BILLS, OKAY?
IN THE MEANTIME, I'M GOING TO DO SOME MORE ROOTING AROUND, SEE IF ANYONE KNOWS WHO'D BE CRAZY ENOUGH TO GO AFTER KINGPIN.
WHOEVER IT IS, THEY'RE EITHER VERY SCARY OR VERY STUPID.
I'LL CHECK BACK HERE ON FRIDAY NIGHT --
PETER, WAIT!

I DON'T GET IT...
I MEAN, WHY DON'T WE DO SOMETHIN' INSTEAD OF ALL THIS NICKEL AN' DIME STUFF?
GIMME ONE CHANCE, I COULD TAKE FISK OUT BY MYSELF --
HA [illegible] STILT [illegible]. I [illegible] YOUR SPIRIT! YOU HAVE THE HEART OF A [illegible], [illegible] FRIEND. BUT A [illegible] WARRIOR KNOWS PATIENCE.
IF YOU EVER -- EVER-- CALL [illegible] SMALL AGAIN, I'LL KILL YOU BEFORE YOU FINISH THE SENTENCE. YOU GOT [illegible], GLADIATOR?
THIS 'WILSON [illegible]' -- HE MAY BE WEAK. BUT [illegible] IS STILL THE EMPEROR OF CRIME, THE [illegible] OF CORRUPTION. WE CAN'T [illegible] UNTIL WE'RE SURE IT [illegible] THE RIGHT [illegible]
I... I MEANT NO OFFENSE...
CHILDREN, MY CHILDREN... >NIKT<... NOW [illegible] NOT THE TIME TO WAR AMONGST OURSELVES.
NOT IF WE [illegible]... >NIKT<... IF WE ARE TO TAKE THIS CITY AND OWN IT.

MY WONDERFUL BOYS... ›NIKT‹ COPPERHEAD, YOURS IS A WELCOME RETURN TO THE FRAY -- SO MUCH EVIL IN THE WORLD. SO LITTLE TIME FOR YOU TO SUBDUE IT.
GLADIATOR. YOU HONOR YOUR CAESAR WITH THE PASSION AND FANATICISM OF A TRUE PSYCHOPATH. FOR THAT, I APPLAUD YOU.
AND YOU, STILT MAN... ›NIKT‹. HOW YOU'VE GROWN. MORE VICIOUS NOW, AND ALL THE BETTER FOR IT. WEAR YOUR ANGER WITH PRIDE, MY SON --
GET BENT.
WE ARE KINDRED SPIRITS ALL, MY BOYS... ›NIKT‹... DISGRACED, DEFILED AND EXILED FROM THIS OPEN SEWER OF CARNALITY AND DEPRAVITY WE CALL CIVILIZATION.
VICTIMS WE MAY BE. BUT TO THE VICTIMS GO THE SPOILS. FOR THIS CITY IS A SHIMMERING PRIZE OF INSANITY, AN ASYLUM OF UNTOLD RICHES.
"...AND SOON, VERY SOON, IT WILL BELONG TO THE INMATES."

I'VE KNOWN JACK ABBOTT ON AND OFF FOR YEARS -- THE "OFF" PART BEING HIS FREQUENT TIMES OF INCARCERATION, AND THE "ON" PART BEING TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR. HE'S A HABITUAL OFFENDER IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD.
BUT EVEN THOUGH JACK'S IN AND OUT LIKE A FOX IN A HENHOUSE, HE'S A PRETTY SHARP GUY -- THE KIND WHO'D BE A SALESMAN OR A LAWYER BUT FOR A COUPLE OF BAD BREAKS. AND, JUST FOR A CHANGE, HE'S INNOCENT...
AS [redacted] TERM OF YOUR PAROLE, JACK, YOU'RE REQUIRED TO AVOID CONTACT WITH KNOWN FELONS. WORD ON THE STREET IS, YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO [redacted] ONBOARD [redacted] NEW OUTFIT.
[redacted] YOU LEVEL WITH ME ON THIS, I PROMISE I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN WORK OUT WITH THE D.A.
YOU ALWAYS BEEN STRAIGHT WITH ME, MISTER MURDOCK, AN' I APPRECIATE THAT. BUT YOU GOT NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE ASKIN'.
THAT OUTFIT YOU THINK YOU HEARD ABOUT... THEM BOYS [redacted] IN IT FOR KEEPS, AN' THEY GOT AN EYE ON EVERY CORNER. YOU LOOK UP [redacted] THE AIR FOR 'EM, AND THEY'RE RIGHT UNDER YOUR FEET, KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN'?
TAP TAP
WE'RE TALKIN' SOME MAJOR FINANCING, MISTER MURDOCK, AN' THE RESOLVE TO BACK IT UP. HELL, HALF THE GUARDS IN [redacted] ARE PROBABLY ON THEIR PAYROLL.
NOWADAYS, YOU DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE COMIN' OR GOING. YOU DON'T KNOW IF YOU SHAKE YOUR FRIEND'S HAND, HE'LL STAB YOU [redacted] THE BACK.
BUT [redacted] THING I KNOW FOR SURE, [redacted] MURDOCK -- YOU KEEP ASKIN' ME THAT QUESTION, AN' I [redacted] IT...
TAP
...I'M A DEAD MAN
TAP

JACK'S TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING-- I CAN SENSE HIS HEART RACING AND HIS PUPILS DILATING EACH TIME HE GOES CLOSE TO IT... HE'S TRYING TO HIDE IT FROM THE GUARD AT THE DOOR.
TAP TAP TAP
IT'S A SUBTLE CHANGE IN [redacted] INFLECTION, AN [redacted] WORD... CLUES HIDDEN IN WHAT HE KEEPS SILENT AS MUCH AS WHAT HE SAYS...
SEVEN TAPS TOTAL--HE'S DEFINITELY SENDING ME SOME KIND OF MESSAGE. I DECIDE TO PLAY ALONG WITH HIS GAME, HOPING TO PICK UP ON THE RULES AS WE GO ALONG...
COME ON, JACK... I CAN'T HELP YOU UNLESS YOU HELP [redacted] FIRST. WHO'VE YOU [redacted] WORKING FOR IN THE LAST MONTH?
YOU WANT ME TO BE SOME KINDA SNITCH, MISTER MURDOCK? NO WAY... THAT AIN'T MY MODUS OPERANDI!
I'M A REFORMED MAN THESE DAYS. ■ REGULAR LATTER-DAY SAINT. JUS' LIKE MARIE OSMOND...
9 7 M.O?

THAT'S ALL I GOT FOR YOU, [redacted] MURDOCK. YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYIN'?
LOUD AND CLEAR, JACK.
I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I'M GOING TO BE ABLE TO HELP YOU. I'D LIKE TO, BUT YOU'VE NOT GIVEN ME A GREAT DEAL TO WORK WITH.
THAT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, MISTER MURDOCK. IF YOU'LL PARDON THE EXPRESSION.
YOU JUST REMEMBER: I NEVER SAID A WORD, OKAY? ANYONE ASKS YOU, JACK ABBOTT DON'T SNITCH TO NO ONE.
DON'T WORRY, JACK. YOU NEVER SAID A WORD...

DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME, GENTLEMEN? THIS IS MY CITY -- NO ONE PRESSES THE KINGPIN! NO ONE!
LIKE RATS IN A CAGE.
FWIP
PING
SECURITY
'HEY! THIS AREA'S OFF-LIMITS --!'
FWIP

DANG
EXTREM
HIGH
VOLTA
DO NOT
ENTE
BZZZZ
SIGHTLESS I MAY BE, GENTLEMEN, BUT MY OPERATIONS REQUIRE MORE THAN EYES. I EXPECT YOUR FULL ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER.
FWIP
HOWDY.
PRTTTT
FWIP
UH, MISTER FISK, SIR? WE GOT SOME KINDA PROBLEM --

CONTROL... YOU COPY? CONTROL..?
SIR, I CAN'T GET ANYONE DOWNSTAIRS. IT COULD BE MY RADIO'S BUSTED -- I'LL CHECK...
FWIP
YEAH... THIS IS TEN-THREE -- I HEAR YOU FINE. NOTHING HERE. OVER.
EMERGENCY EXIT
BLAM! BLAM!
FWIP
POOR LITTLE RODENTS... TAKE AWAY THEIR EYES
SLK

WHAT'S HAPPENED? WHAT IS IT?
GGGZZL
KTOOM
FWIP
YOU'D BETTER WAIT HERE, SIR. WE GOT SOME KINDA SITUATION GOIN' DOWN...
FWIP
...AND THEY CANNOT SEE --
OH, CRAP.

FWIP FWIP FWIP FWIP FWIP
FSSHHHKK

FWIP FWIP
WHAT'S HAPPENING? SOMEONE... ANYONE?
I DEMAND TO KNOW --

KA-THOOM
NEXT: THE STING